Under Secretary-General of United Nations for Peace Keeping visited India on 10-11 January, 2005.

(b) No Sir, Mr. Guehenno did not seek any additional deployment or augmentation of India's contribution to UN Peace Keeping.

(c) and (d) Do not arise.

Assistance to Iraq

359. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received request from the Government of Iraq for assistance in its reconstruction efforts particularly in the field of construction, engineering, oil exploration, Information Technology, etc; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The Government of Iraq has requested us for manpower training in various fields.

(b) Government has been assisting Iraq in the reconstruction work through development of its human resources by providing training in India to Iraqi officials in wide-ranging areas including diplomacy, infromation technology, industrial electronics and instrumentation, agro-industry, entrepreneurship development, management development, human resource planning and development, promotion of micro enterprises, industrial project preparation, etc.

Issuance of passports in Andhra Pradesh

360. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of passports issued in the Andhra Pradesh in 2003-04 and 2004-05;

(b) what steps are being taken to issue passports with more ease in this area;

(c) whether there is any possibility of opening new passport offices in the State; and

(d) the steps proposed to expand and increase the capacity of such passport offices in the State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) The number of passports issued from the two Passport Offices in Andhra Pradesh in 2003-04 are 3,20,783 and in 2004-05 (till January 2005) are 2,96,668;

(b) Steps taken by the Government to issue passports with more ease include - (i) computerization of Passport Offices; (ii) decentralisation of submission of passport applications to district level; (iii) machine-writing of passports; (iv) wider availabihty of passport application forms; (v) regular upgradation of office equipment; (vi) use of IVRS (Interactive Voice Response System) in Passport Office Hyderabad which provides information regarding passport procedures round the clock in multilingual mode; and (vii) streamlining the existing system in the Passport Office, Hyderabad through Quality Management System (ISO-9000).

(c) and (d) There is no proposal to open a new Passport Office in the State at present.

Candlelight vigil by war widows association

361. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government are aware of the War Widows Association's Candlelight Vigil at India Gate on 31st of January, impressing upon the Government for the release of officers and soldiers from India and Pakistan, missing in action from 1965 and 1971 wars;

(b) if so, whether Government has full information about the details of such Indian and Pakistani soldiers in each other's country who are languishing in jails of otherwise incarcerated; and

(c) whether there is any on-going detente conducive towards working out such a 'release' through effective diplomatic dialogue?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) 54 missing Indian Defence Personnel are reported to be in the Pakistani custody. Governemnt of Pakistan has, howevere, never acknowledged the presence of any Indian POW in Pak jails. There is no Pakistani Prisoner of War in Indian custody.